

Presentation Primary School

Station Road, Portarlington, Co. Laois
School Roll Number: 15556i
Charity Number: 20126018
Phone: 057 - 8623007
www.presprimary.ie
Email: info@presprimary.ie



Principal Teacher: Cathal Ruane

Deputy Principal Teacher: Mairéad Terry

Dear Parents,

As a school we are very proud of how our pupils conduct themselves both in school and away at events. The vast majority of the girls in the senior classes behave impeccably here every day however we have had a number of incidents lately, particularly with the use of mobile phones/devices in senior classes that have made us as staff review our practices.

Our school is one, which I hope you agree, that is respectful to all and we try at every opportunity to reinforce the central values of the school which are that we expect each pupil to be **Respectful, Responsible, Resourceful, Resilient** and **Reflective**. We do this so your child is happy coming in everyday and that she reaches her potential both as a person and a learner.

We are all aware of how dangerous poor self-esteem and social media can be especially to a child's mental health. We would like to clarify that;

- **Face to face bullying** is not acceptable. This means that a child is commenting or taunting another pupil on a number of occasions here during school day.
- **Cyber-bullying** is not acceptable. A single negative message, video or comment online is deemed to be bullying because it has the power to be read by a number of people and exist on a group chat or video app.

Language or comments that are abusive, sexual, racist, homophobic etc will not be tolerated during the school day or which is directed to a child in our school by another child in our school online.

We respect a parents' decision if they decide to give their child a mobile phone and the use of social media apps but we are asking you to monitor your child's phone or device on regular basis as the responsible adult. The content, messages and videos that have come to our attention are quite worrying for us. Please make sure you have full access to the device and that no apps are hidden in folders etc off the landing page.

We also strongly advise that you contact the school rather than talk to any child directly other than your own daughter of course.

What changes are going to happen?

As of today no pupil is allowed a mobile phone, Ipad, Ipod or smart watch in school or at school events whether the phone is on or off. Any message needed to be given to a pupil can be done so through the office. Any phone confiscated will be taken and must be collected by a parent.

Any incidents of cyber bullying that take place between students in our school will be dealt with through the Deputy Principal or Principal. Screenshots/screenshots must also be available as evidence of the bullying. *Our teachers need all the time possible to teach their classes and currently too much time is being taken up on phone related issues.*

We cannot accept excuses such as a phone was 'hacked' or another child logged into their account. As with all online accounts passwords should be private to you and your child. Responsibility will be

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on the child who owns the account which you have allowed them permission to have. Retaliation is not an excuse for vulgar comments please allow us to support you if needed.

What sanctions are in place to implement our Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy?

If a pupil's phone is confiscated in school it must be collected by a parent, it will not be returned to the pupil. Both the pupil and parent will need to sign a pupil promise before the phone is returned.

Face to face bullying – Parents will be invited into school to discuss the incident and a written warning will be issued. On the second incidence parents will be invited in to discuss what took place and a suspension of one school day will be issued. This process may start again for further incidents and any suspension could be increased in length. Both the child and parent will need to sign a pupil promise before returning to school.

Cyber Bullying – Where by a parent of a child in our school brings evidence of a nasty, malicious or abusive message/video to our attention the school management will investigate. We can only use our Code of Behaviour sanctions if both the bully and the victim are pupils in our school. On a pupil's first incidence a written warning will be issued, the second incidence will result in a one day suspension. This process may start again for further incidents and any suspension could be increased in length. Both the child and parent will need to sign a pupil promise before returning to school.

Disrespect to School Staff - Parents will be invited into school to discuss the incident and a written warning will be issued. On the second incidence parents will be invited in to discuss what took place and a suspension of one school day will be issued. This process may start again for further incidents and any suspension could be increased in length. Both the child and parent will need to sign a pupil promise before returning to school. *(Teachers will have their own class rules to create a positive class environment, three offences or disrespect in a school year will result in a written warning).*

***for extremely serious offences as per our policy a pupil may be suspended after one gross breach of behaviour. Written warnings will be kept on file and will be active for the length of time a child is in our school. The written warning and second incidence can be a mixture of cyber and face to face.**

We as a school are trying to take a zero tolerance on poor social media behaviour or any online abuse and indeed ensuring that the children respect one another face to face during the day. We do need your help with this as we are all here for the girls and ensuring they are kept as safe as possible. Parents and school staff are working together so please support us as we try to allow your daughter to have the best school experience. We are very fortunate to have a great bunch of pupils here but this letter I hope will give clarity going forward of how we will be ensuring our high standards that we believe in are maintained, which I am sure you will agree with.

As always I wish to genuinely thank all our parents for the great support shown to the staff and myself, I really appreciate it.

Kind regards